

DRAFT

**Affordable Housing Study Working Group**

**March 9, 2015**

**Meeting Notes**

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Members present: Dr. Leonard Hamlin (Chair), Michael Spotts, Shelynda Brown, Richard Donohoe, Matthew de Ferranti, John Grant, Linda Kelleher, Joan Lawrence, Dave Leibson, Dave Peterson, Saul Reyes, Kathryn Scruggs Steve Sockwell, Ori Weisz

Staff: Russell Danao-Schroeder, Rolda Nedd, David Cristeal, Jennifer Daniels, Anita Friedman

Consultants: Jeanette Chapman

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**1. Welcome and Introductions**

The meeting was called to order by Dr. Hamlin at 6:43

**2. Public Comment**

Speaker 1: Taylor Blunt, Firefighters of Arlington. Mr. Taylor addressed the group and posed the question whether the proposed Affordable Housing Master Plan is serving the “greatest good for the greatest number of people”. He spoke about the salaries of workers such as teachers and firefighters (over 60% of AMI) whose income is about \$3,000 more than the targeted eligible income groups, for whom assistance is available and appear to be the major focus of the Master Plan. There is also no direct assistance program for these workers. He encouraged the group to look at policies that provide affordable housing for all segments of the population, to be more equitable.

Speaker 2: Doris Ray, representing The Endependence Center. Ms. Ray commented that the AHMP could be enhanced to meet the needs of disability community. Although there is a target in the Implementation Framework, Ms. Ray felt that a stronger statement is needed in the Plan. The policy to produce accessible units should be incorporated under the supply goal. Specifically – Goals and Targets – accessibility is an essential component for persons with disability and entire community. Need specific objective that addresses production of accessible units. Would like to see 10% of total number of units in any new construction be accessible units. This should be especially possible with projects funded with local and State funds.

Dr. Hamlin acknowledge both comments and indicated that the WG deliberations have included these two topics but will continue to garner attention.

**3. Approval of January 2015 Meeting notes:**

Moved and seconded for approval with correction, removal of ‘Steve Sockwell’, name appears twice under “members present”.

S. Sockwell: Long Range Planning Commission (LRPC) member presented a letter from the Commission and summarized its content. (Letter available)

- The Commission suggested merging both documents to create one

- There was comment on 17.7% which is the proposed percentage of affordable housing to be available for families and individuals with incomes below 60% being too precise a number
- The Commission agreed that the AHMP met the Code of Virginia requirement for Affordable Housing as an element of the Comprehensive Plan
- Location of Affordable Housing units within transit corridors – given the high cost of units within transit corridors is this a sustainable strategy?
- The inclusion of a statement on Public Land for Public Good was questioned given community response
- Supported the recommendation to revisit the Accessory Dwelling Ordinance
- Commissioners were not in agreement with proposed amendment to Bonus Density policy
- Expressed concern about home-sharing policy

In general, the LRPC gave positive feedback on the document in terms of style and substance. They strongly recommended that there be “professional-grade communications strategy” to get the right message to the public.

Various members commented on the LRPC comments- there was agreement on the suggestion about communication strategy. Members did not agree to the suggestion to merge the two documents. Each document is different- The Master Plan requires Board approval and adoption whereas the Implementation Framework is provided for ‘acceptance’ it is a document that will continue to evolve. The intention is to continue to research, update and apply the tools as needed.

Dr. Hamlin summarized his opinion of the LRPC meeting as being generally acceptable of the document, in terms of its scope and coverage of the important issues. So far he thinks the document has been well received. The charge for the Working Group to identify and address the many facets of the Affordable Housing problem and to present them to the community is well addressed and covered in the document. The charge was not to solve all the problems. He commended the group and staff.

#### **4. Affordable Housing Master Plan**

- Russell Danao-Schroeder indicated that the purpose of the meeting was to seek endorsement for the AHMP from the Working Group, an indication that the document is ready for the Board working session. Is it a comprehensive, thorough document?
- K. Scruggs – commented on an article (Housing Matters) on Washington DC’s housing policies and programs for employees. She commented that this was a shortcoming in the AHMP; however she was satisfied that the document overall is quite comprehensive. In response Russell commented that in the presentation to the Board several questions including this, are posed for the Board to give guidance.
- J. Grant – posed the question whether the WG felt that the document adequately addressed the comments about accessibility and housing for the middle income residents including workers. There was discussion about accessibility requirements in new and rehabilitation projects.

- L. Kelleher suggested that these types of issues can be more thoroughly discussed through the relevant Commissions. More in depth analysis required to add details to the policies, all ongoing work, makes the document a “living document”.
- D. Leibson – suggested that the document be accompanied by a Memo that outlines what outstanding questions may still exist. This will form part of the documentation for follow-up work.
- Dr. Hamlin – The Board recognized that there is more work to be done. The charge for the WG is have we raised the key questions and addressed them knowing that we have more work to do.
- M. Spotts – commented that he is satisfied with the document and endorses it. The document as is, allows for flexibility to address changes as they occur
- M. de Ferranti– expressed reservation that the LRPC letter did not quite endorse the Plan and whether this will present a problem for Board approval. S. Stockwell responded that as a subcommittee of the Planning Commission, LRPC’s role is to give advice. The Planning Commission will consider and provide a letter of recommendation.
- Several members commented and agreed that it is important to point out that the distinction between the two documents. The Master Plan represents a long term policy for Affordable Housing, the Implementation Framework is a list of tools or options to provide Affordable housing. They also agreed that that the Plan begins the conversation on Affordable Housing.
- J. Lawrence – commented that there is a need to be clear that this doc is not final. Should educate the public on the role of the document, more work is needed on some policies.
- Dave Peterson – offered endorsement although he felt there were some deficiencies.

**Motion to endorse Master Plan – moved and seconded. Unanimous agreement.**

5. AHMP Implementation Framework

There were several comments:

- M. Spotts agreed to endorse the document he suggested that we clarify that the implementation framework is a list of options/tools for consideration; exclusion from the list will not preclude County from considering anything else. The tools are non-prescriptive and non-exhaustive and may change over time.
- Should keep the policy on co-location of facilities and affordable housing; each site will be the subject of its own public process. Use updated language from the most recent version of the AHMP.
- Revisit certain areas programs such as MIPAP to make improvements to homeownership options.
- Question as to the strength of the recommendations, are these tools identified as the best tools that will form the basis of further work to meet the Plans intention? Are these “tools” recommended by the WG?
- There was some discussion on the title of the document, whether it needed a subtitle and whether “framework” should be replaced by “toolkit”, “guidelines”; to convey to the public that the document is not a final product and that it represents ideas that require further research and refinement.

**Motion to endorse Implementation Framework with additional sentences clarifying non - exhaustive nature of document and the purpose and use of the document. Unanimous agreement.**

**6. Civic Engagement Plan**

Jennifer Daniels gave a presentation on the Civic Engagement Plan, assisted by L. Kelleher.

- Members had questions about how feedback would be recorded and mechanisms that will be used to record comments.
- There was the suggestion that County staff should be accompanied by a WG member where ever possible, especially at Civic Association meetings.
- There were suggestions on how to get feedback, including online. L. Kelleher stressed the importance for WG members to get familiar with the documents, the tools and policies so that they can be informed and able to share information at different venues. Commission meetings are more visible meetings; all meetings will be posted on the website.
- The aim of the plan is to use many different tools to engage the many stakeholders, meetings, online tools such as list serves, social media, newsletters
- One member indicated that having key bits of facts that people can easily digest would go a long way.

**7. Announcements**

March 31<sup>st</sup> next WG meeting

The meeting adjourned at 8:30 p.m.